

REMARKS

This is a continuation of co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/461,236, filed December 16, 1999. It is respectfully requested that the within amendments be made to the subject continuation application prior to examination thereof by the Examiner.

The Specification has been amended to include a reference to the parent of the subject application and to indicate that said parent claims the priority of Provisional Application Serial No. 60/135,259. The claims have been amended to clarify the subject matter for which patent protection is being sought by way of the subject continuation application. More specifically, claims 1 - 20 have been cancelled, and new claims 21- 32 have been added, which new claims clarify the subject matter for which patent protection is being sought by way of the subject continuation application. It is noted that some of new claims 21 - 32 are directed, at least in part, to subject matter comprised, at least in part, in cancelled claims 1 - 7 and 12 - 15. No prosecution history estoppel results from the within claim amendments because this is a continuation application, and the within amendments are being made for the purpose of clarifying the subject matter for which patent protection is being sought.

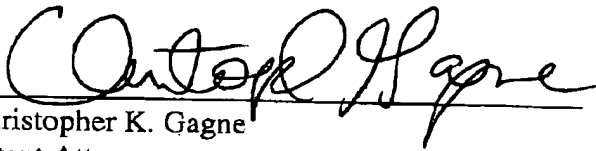
An Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) accompanies this Preliminary Amendment, which IDS cites the prior art made of record in the parent. It is respectfully requested that the Examiner consider and make of record in the subject continuation application the prior art cited in the IDS and made of record in the parent.

In the event that the Examiner deems personal contact desirable in the further disposition of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at 508-865-4168.

Please charge any shortages and credit any overcharges occasioned by this submission to Deposit
Account number 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 15 JAN 04



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